

May, 1938

To the Editor of the North-China Daily News

Sir,--

I am in close touch with many friends long resident in Nanking, and out of information received from them, I wish to appeal to the higher Japanese authorities to remedy the cruelty and crime still being inflicted upon the hapless population of that city after five months of military brutality. The local officers seem to be indifferent to humanitarian standards, careless of their country's reputation, and insubordinate to their superiors' declared policy of friendliness toward the Chinese population.

Though the situation in Nanking has improved by comparison with the unprecedented violence of December, January, and early February, even now, with fewer soldiers in the city, there is still an uncivilized state of affairs. Robbery is the daily business of sentries, to say nothing of roving soldiers. Chinese entering the city are commonly searched by three or four sets of guards, most of whom take their toll of cash, and of market produce also if they fancy it. But everybody is accustomed to robbery by men in uniform who claim to be the special representatives of the Emperor, and robbery really does not matter. Besides, it is sometimes covered by "purchase", in which a soldier takes what he likes and gives a tenth of its value in military notes or in extinct German marks.

The serious crimes are rape, murder, and mayhem, all of which occur continually. Here are a few samples from recent days, of cases that have come before the attention of reliable friends:

On a main road, soldiers break into a house looking for women. They kill a man in the process.

In daylight, soldiers pursue a young woman into her own home, and from room to room until she jumps out of an upper window and breaks it.



leg.

Drunken soldiers attempt to rape a child of nine, injuring her severely. Later, one of the group tries to conceal the affair by giving the parents three dollars with a threatening order against taking the child to a hospital.

Late one evening, two soldiers enter a house through a window, and find themselves in the room of a woman more than fifty years old. She refuses their demands for young women, and says that she will notify the officer in a nearby headquarters. As the old woman starts out, the soldiers kill her with stabs in the face and breast.

Soldiers and ronin enter a cloth shop at night, bind the five men and women of the family, and remove several hundred dollars' worth of cloth and cash, the entire means of livelihood for a considerable group of people. In the morning the victims report to a high police officer, who judiciously warns them -- "Don't get too excited about this, or the Japanese may burn your place down." He was a man of experience.

When soldiers order a man of seventy years to carry burdens for them, he does n't move with alacrity. So they break his arm with a rifle-butt, leaving the bone sticking out through the flesh.

Is this Bushido? Is this the spread of imperial virtue upon the mainland? Do higher Japanese officials care how the "pacification" of the Far East is carried out?

There will be no improvement unless and until the criminal elements in certain branches of the Japanese services are torn out. Unless and until the higher authorities put some responsible people in Nanking, with sufficient honour and backbone to establish preventive controls and to make them steadily effective. Unless and until it is made both safe and worth while for the families of the murdered and the maimed and the raped to report promptly to competent officials.



Nanking is no exception to the general plight of the occupied areas in Central China. Often the smaller places suffer worse, in the absence of any superior officer. Tens of millions of people are being made "anti-Japanese" (if that is the <sup>equivalent term for</sup> ~~meaning of~~ hatred for of murderers and rapists) with a thoroughness of which the Kuomintang never dreamed.

Sweet nothings and greasy denials from professional spokesmen are not dependable materials for the long and serious task of rebuilding an imperial reputation. Japanese bayonets split them daily, with the same strokes that hack the flesh of innocent civilians.

VERITAS

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